

We claim:

1. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-executable instructions for the storage and distribution of media files, the software comprising:
a library program managing a plurality of encrypted media files, and
5 a player program for displaying media files on an audio-visual device, the player program in network communication with the library program, wherein:
the player program requests a media file from the library program,
the library program sends the media file to the player program in an encrypted format,
10 when the media file is completely received, the player program decodes the file into an unencrypted format and displays the media on an audio - visual device.
2. The software of claim 1, wherein:
the library program operates on a first computer system and the player
15 program operates on a second computer system connected to the first computer system on a network.
3. The software of claim 1, wherein:
the player program decodes the file into an unencrypted format without
writing the unencrypted format to a file and without allowing the operator of
20 the second computer to access, copy, delete, or corrupt the unencrypted format while the unencrypted format is being displayed or at any time thereafter.
4. The software of claim 1, wherein:
a first player program automatically creates a public folder containing a data
25 file, the folder being stored on the second computer such that a second player program operating on a third computer in the network requests and receives the data file from the first player program.

5. The software of claim 4, wherein:
the data file is an encrypted media file requested and received from the library program.
- 5 6. The software of claim 5, wherein:
a network address of the first player program is retained by the library program after a transfer of an encrypted media file to the first player program, and subsequent requests of the library program for the same encrypted media file are transferred to the first player program by the library program using the network address.
- 10 7. The software of claim 1, wherein:
an application program operates simultaneously with the player program on the second computers, the application program operating on digital files available to the second computer.
- 15 8. The software of claim 1, wherein:
the player program requests a second media file from the library program at a predicted time during the display of a first media file such that the second media file completely received before the end of the display of the first media file.
- 20 9. The software of claim 8, wherein:
a sequence of media files are requested of the library program by the player program and are displayed in order on the audio - visual device, where each subsequent media file is requested and complete received by the player before the display of the previous media file is complete.
- 25 10. The software of claim 1, wherein:
the audio-visual device is a television.

11. A method of distributing media in a network, the method comprising the steps of:
storing an encrypted media file on a library managed by a library program operating on a first computer in the network,
5 requesting the encrypted media from the library program by a player program operating on a second computer in the network,
receiving the encrypted media file completely at the second computer, dynamically decoding the encrypted media into an unencrypted format, displaying the unencrypted format on an audio-visual device.
- 10 12. The method of claim 11, wherein:
a second media file is requested by the player program from the library program at a predicted time while the unencrypted format is being displayed, wherein the second media file is completely received by the player program at a time earlier than a time the unencrypted format display is complete.
- 15 13. The method of claim 11, wherein:
the audio-visual device is a television.
14. The method of claim 11, wherein:
the unencrypted format is simultaneously displayed on a second audio-visual device.
- 20 15. The method of claim 11, wherein:
a second player program operating on a third computer in the network, requests the media file from a second library program operating on the second computer in the network.
16. The method of claim 11, wherein:
25 the unencrypted format is displayed without writing to a storage device.

17. A method for transferring a first media file having a first size and a second media file having a second size from a library program operating on a first computer in a network to a player program operating on a second computer in the network, the method having the steps of:
- 5 a) the player program requesting the first media file from the library program at a first time,
- b) the player program receiving the complete first media file at a second time,
- d) the player program displaying the first media file on an audio-visual
- 10 device, wherein the displaying of the first media file will complete at a third time,
- e) the player program requesting the second media file at a predicted time,
- f) the player program receiving the complete second media file at a fourth time, wherein the fourth time is earlier than the third time,
- 15 g) the player program displaying the second media file on the audio-visual device.
18. A method for transferring a first media file having a first size and a second media file having a second size from a library program operating on a first computer in a network to a player program operating on a second computer
- 20 in the network, the method having the steps of:
- a) the player program requesting the first media file from the library program at a first time,
- b) the player program receiving the complete first media file at a second time,
- d) the player program displaying the first media file on an audio-visual
- 25 device, wherein the displaying of the first media file will complete at a third time,
- e) the player program requesting the second media file at a predicted time,
- f) the player program receiving the complete second media file at a fourth

time, wherein the fourth time is earlier than the third time,
g) the player program displaying the second media file on the audio-visual device.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein:

the predicted time is calculated using the steps:

a) a first interval is calculated as the difference between the second time and the first time,

b) a transfer rate is calculated by dividing the first size by the first interval,

c) a second interval is calculated by multiplying the transfer rate by the second size,

d) a third interval is calculated by multiplying the second interval by a safety factor,

e) the predicted time is calculated by subtracting the third interval from the third time.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein:

the safety factor has a value of about 2.